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GOP Delegates Identify Bush Shortcomings As Well As Strengths
 By RICHARD L. VERNACI
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NEW ORLEANS (AP) The Republicans who are about to nominate George Bush for president see some 200 shortcomings in the candidate.

They say he's too liberal or too conservative, too nice or too honest, too rich or too loyal. A few uttered the word "wimp" but others defended Bush against such a label.

"He's a lousy campaigner," carped James Proctor, a North Carolina lawyer whose favorite candidate, Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas, lost out to Bush in the race for the nomination.

"He hasn't been elected to a major office for quite a few years, and I'm a little worried about that, I guess," Gene Warkenthien of South Dakota said of the man who was elected vice president in 1980 and 1984.

Proctor and Warkenthien were among 1,215 delegates to the Republican National Convention who responded to an Associated Press survey. In all, 2,277 delegates will attend the convention which opens today in New Orleans.

When asked to identify Bush's major strengths and weaknesses, delegates' responses fell into 228 categories on his weaknesses and 127 on his strengths.

Sixty-three percent of the delegates said Bush's experience in government, especially his work in foreign policy, would be his greatest asset in the fall election.

"In all the years that I have been attending national conventions, there has not been a single aspirant who has the congressional, executive and leadership experience" of Bush, said George Hering of Delaware, who has been attending conventions since 1964.

In addition to serving as vice president, Bush has been director of the CIA, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, a member of Congress, and U.S. envoy to China.

Bush's biggest problem, according to those who are about to nominate him for president, is his image and speaking style. Nearly 32 percent of the delegates cited these as the obstacles he needs to overcome in his race for the White House.

Many said Bush had been unfairly labeled as a "wimp" and blamed the news media for pinning that on him.

"He is perceived as being weak the wimp factor a Charlie Brown character," said Edwin J. Guillot Jr., a delegate from Puerto Rico. "It isn't weakness, it's decency, integrity, but people see it as weakness and it could cost him the election."

Pennsylvania delegate Charles Sexton was direct: "They don't put wimps in as head of the CIA."

The delegates see being vice president as both a blessing and a

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curse, allowing Bush to be a part of the Reagan administration's successes but also forcing him to take the heat for its failures while keeping his opinions to himself.

He's the vice president, which is a weak office. Someone said it ain't worth a cup of warm spit and he has proven how true that is," said Howard Clement, a delegate from North Carolina.

He will end up apologizing for Reagan on civil rights issues, ethics issues, economic issues," Clement said. "He's got a lot of baggage."

While there was no shortage of criticism, almost all of the delegates also had nice things to say about their nominee.

When he tells you something, you can believe him," said David O'Steen of North Carolina.

His greatest strength is the fact that he's been part of an administration that has seen the country come from the brink of disaster to a very solid, stable situation in about every aspect," said Rudy Munro of Missouri.

I don't think he would have been made head of the CIA if he wasn't intelligent," said Marguerite Armstrong of Vermont.

And finally there was a piece of advice.

If he can appear as the All-American Boy Scout, that'll be his strength," said Arizona delegate Evan Mecham, who was impeached and removed from office as the state's governor in April.